



Bloody Barriers

THE KARANKAWA COAST, 1777-95

Bernardo de Gálvez's hostile reaction to George Gauld's presence on the Mississippi suggests that the Spanish governor at least had an inkling of what the British survey crew had been up to. As Gauld ended his daring mapping expedition along the Spanish coast west of the big river, Gálvez prepared to send his own crew to chart the same area. It seemed a propitious time to act on a point of his instructions directing an effort to explore and map the coasts.

The governor's instructions, as noted previously, had their basis in Francisco Bouligny's recommendations to the Indies minister José de Gálvez. They called for exploring and mapping the delta coast from Bayou Saint John at New Orleans's doorstep through lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne and thence around the birdfoot subdelta to Lake Barataria, west of the delta. The instructions also specified mapping the Gulf Coast westward to Espíritu Santo (Matagorda) Bay. To that end, the schooner *Señor de la Yedra*, captained by Luis Antonio Andry, sailed from New Orleans on December 13, 1777.¹

Gálvez had carefully chosen the French engineer to lead the important mission. Andry's service in the colony since the arrival of Gen. Alejandro O'Reilly to assert Spanish control was highly regarded. O'Reilly had employed Andry as one of the commissioners to examine the post of La Baliza, which Governor Ulloa had established on Isla Real de San Carlos at the mouth of the Mississippi River; his name appears on the report of the river-mouth post that O'Reilly forwarded to then-Indies minister Julián de Arriaga and on the map of Isla Real sent with the report. Governor Unzaga y Amezaga, in recommending Andry's appointment as commandant of the Acadian Coast in 1776, described him as "brevet captain and second adjutant of this post [New Orleans]." Besides experience in the service of both

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① Cite
Why Andry was there

France and Spain, Unzaga noted, Andry "has personal merits, talents, and a knowledge of mathematics, . . . the only one here grounded in this science, which he employs to the benefit of the service." Somewhat later Gálvez lamented that Andry was not available for planning the new settlement of Gálveztown, declaring him "the only person in this country well qualified to draw up plans accurately."²

On the coastal mapping voyage to Matagorda Bay, Captain Andry was accompanied by his twelve-year-old son, a cadet. There were twelve other crewmen, including the second captain and pilot, Isidro Millet. Among the seamen were Cristóbal Gómez, who, having once served as a soldier at Presidio de la Bahía, claimed familiarity with the Texas coast and its Indians; and Tomás de la Cruz, a young Maya Indian from the Yucatán Peninsula—both slated for key roles in the unfolding drama.

The voyage was not undertaken without awareness of the risks involved. Notwithstanding George Gauld's trespass the previous summer,³ the coast remained little known and much dreaded. Return of *El Señor de la Yedra*, therefore, was awaited anxiously in New Orleans. Concern mounted as months went by without news.

On October 24, 1778, Bernardo de Gálvez communicated his fears to his uncle, José de Gálvez, minister of the Indies. In view of the time that had elapsed, he wrote, he held faint hopes that Captain Andry had escaped "fatal misfortune." By mid-January, 1779, his fears were confirmed: "I have been informed by the post commandants of Natchitoches and Atacapas, Don Atanasio de Mézières and Don Alexandro Declouet," he reported, "that in the neighborhood of La Bahía del Espíritu Santo, there have been found the remains of a schooner which was lost at that place." Through their Indian contacts, the two commandants had obtained such news, including the fact that the ravaged ship had a crew of fourteen. From the description, it seemed certain that Andry and his crew were the victims. "It remains only for me to request," the governor wrote, "that you turn the merciful heart of our sovereign to the relief of [Andry's] afflicted family. . . ."⁴

Yet confirmation was lacking, and Don Bernardo saw a flicker of hope the following March. "Evidence" consisting of nothing more than scraps of paper picked up by the Indians along the seashore west of the Calcasieu River was brought to Francisco Boulogny at New Iberia. On learning of these *papelitos* bearing the names of the two captains, Gálvez jumped to a conclusion; he asked Boulogny to

spare no effort to verify that some of Andry's men might be living among the natives.⁵ By that time news of *Señor de la Yedra's* disastrous channels, to reach New Orleans months later.

Don Bernardo's appeal for relief for Captain Andry's wife, pending definite news of her husband's fate, received prompt attention in Madrid. A royal order authorizing her to receive her husband's salary was issued on April 24, 1779.⁶ Two months previously, the Maya sailor Tomás de la Cruz had appeared at Presidio de la Bahía as *Yedra's* lone survivor.

Almost a year after the schooner had put into Matagorda Bay and there met her gruesome fate, a missionary priest obtained Tomás's release from Karankawan slavery and took him to Capt. Joseph Santoja at La Bahía.⁷ Santoja, after interrogating his guest, notified Governor Cabello, who ordered that Tomás be sent to him at San Antonio de Béxar. Cabello, with due concern for Spanish legalism, took Tomás's declaration on March 14 and forwarded it to Commandant-General Teodoro de Croix in Sonora. Croix, typically, failed to reply in timely fashion. Concerned that no official word of the tragedy had yet been sent to Louisiana, Cabello at last wrote to Bernardo de Gálvez in July, 1779, and sent Cruz to New Orleans.⁸

A twenty-year-old Christian, Tomás de la Cruz had left his native village of Nisamal, thirty leagues from Campeche, to become a seaman. By way of Veracruz and Havana, he came to New Orleans, where he signed on Captain Andry's voyage. Only by his chance survival did the story of that fateful voyage become fully known.⁹

Having sailed from New Orleans in December, 1777, *Yedra* reached Matagorda Bay by early March, 1778. The exploration and mapping were essentially complete, but the ship's provisions were all but gone. The ship came to anchor inside the "port of Matagorda,"¹⁰ and some Indians appeared on shore. Cristóbal Gómez, the former La Bahía soldier who claimed familiarity with this region, offered to go ashore with four other men. It would be an easy matter, he said, to get provisions for the small band at a nearby native *ranchería*; the five men then could march on to La Bahía and obtain whatever the ship needed. Captain Andry, seemingly unaware of the hostility that still existed among the Karankawas, was persuaded. The five men disappeared into the wilderness flatland, trusting in the unknown natives who walked beside them.

Days passed without word from the relief party. The captain, with

growing uneasiness, fired off a swivel gun and ran the flag up the mast, hoping the men on shore would respond. Instead of the five Spaniards, two Indians appeared, claiming in Castilian that they were soldiers from Presidio de la Bahía, assigned as lookouts to keep the captain posted of happenings on that section of coast. All too credulous, Andry sent a boat to bring on board the apostate Karankawas Joseph María and Mateo, whose trademark was treachery and murder.

While familiarizing themselves with the ship, Joseph María and Mateo adroitly overcame the mariners' caution. Bringing meat for the starving men, they warned them of the hostile natives who lived along the coast. Trustingly, the captain asked their help in looking for the five men who had gone to seek aid; when the two Indians went ashore, supposedly to begin the search, three more sailors went with them.

The Indians soon returned, claiming to have arranged for others to find the missing men. The three sailors who had gone with them, they said, had remained on shore to feast on a game kill. Joseph María and Mateo now stalled for time, waiting for reinforcements. As more Indians came on board, they seized the mariners' unguarded guns and finished the bloody work that had begun with the murder of the first five men to leave the ship.

Some four months later, in July, 1778, the Indians of Mission Rosario, near Presidio de la Bahía, took flight and went to join the Karankawas who inhabited the coastal islands. The prime instigator of the flight was none other than Joseph María, ably assisted by his brother and Mateo. Joseph María's aged mother started out with the fugitives but could not keep pace. Angered at her slowness, Joseph María killed her with a lance thrust and left her body upon the trail.¹¹

③ INCLUDE The Karankawas, reinforced by the apostates, began raiding livestock herds and settlers in the Bahía vicinity. Governor Ripperdá, in one of his last official acts, pardoned the fugitives, and they returned to the mission—excepting Joseph María, Mateo, and a few others scattered among the *indios bravos* of the coast. In February, 1779, Fray Joaquín de Escobar, minister of Mission Rosario, set out for the coast to persuade the remaining fugitives to return. Risking his life among the unrepentant apostates, Escobar at last found two of his charges who were willing to come back. From them he learned of the *mozo cristiano*, the young Christian, held by Joseph María and Mateo. He sought out the two renegades and boldly demanded surrender of their captive. Surprisingly, they complied. The young Maya

sailor Tomás de la Cruz accompanied the padre to La Bahía on February 13, at last to confirm the wildest rumors and worst fears concerning the fate of Captain Andry and his crew.¹²

Tomás, telling his story at La Bahía and San Antonio, related that he had been in the ship's hold when the companions of Joseph María and Mateo came on board to massacre the Spaniards with their own guns. Hearing the shots, he tried to hide among sacks of provisions, but Joseph María soon found him and took him out on deck. There followed an argument among his captors over whether he was to live or die. Joseph María saved his life by claiming him as his slave. The Karankawas danced around the bodies of the five slain men while stripping them of their clothing, then threw the corpses into the bay. They carried to shore, in the two ship's boats, the five swivel guns, eleven muskets, barrels of gunpowder, and cases of musketballs. They then burned the ship, and with it perhaps the first detailed Spanish map of the Texas-Louisiana coast. Like many another luckless ship—Spanish, French, and English—that met misfortune on the Karankawa coast, *El Señor de la Yedra* left on this wilderness beach not her bones but only her ashes.

Following the massacre, Tomás related, Joseph María led his companions on a further romp into the Rio Grande Valley to run off sheep and horses in the Camargo vicinity. This band, said the Maya sailor, comprised sixty warriors, almost all Karankawas, who lived most of the time on the barrier islands. The Indians were not adept at managing the firearms taken from Captain Andry's ship, Tomás reported; for want of proper care, the muskets quickly became unserviceable.

Tomás's report to Cabello made known at last the precise fate of *Señor de la Yedra* and her captain and crew. As the governor signed the document on March 20, 1779—the anniversary of the tragic event—the lone survivor waited at Presidio de San Antonio de Bédar to be sent back to New Orleans. He, with Cabello's report to Gálvez on the Andry affair, was conducted by Francisco García,¹³ whose presence in Texas was related to events occurring well beyond the borders of the province. García had come as Gálvez's agent to buy up to two thousand cattle. The need stemmed from Spain's entry into the war with Great Britain.¹⁴ Perhaps indicative of the Croix-Gálvez alliance, the traditional trade barriers between Texas and Louisiana were temporarily set aside on Croix's order. From 1779 to 1782, thousands of Texas cattle—largely from the Gulf Coast mission herds—

were driven east to feed Gálvez's troops campaigning on the Mississippi and the Gulf Coast, an effective second-front war for the relief of the insurgent American colonists.¹⁵

Long after Cruz's testimony was transmitted to Croix in Sonora and Gálvez in New Orleans, it was brought forth to focus attention on the needs of yet another victim of the tragedy. Bernardo de Gálvez, even while *Yedra's* fate was still a matter of conjecture, had voiced concern for the plight of Luis Andry's family, and the Crown granted immediate relief. Yet nothing was said on behalf of the second captain's survivors. Finally, in New Orleans in 1786, Eulalia Llorens y Millet, on the basis of her husband's death in the king's service, petitioned the Crown for a pension.¹⁶ Her efforts were unavailing. She renewed her appeal in January, 1791, when her agent drew up a new petition and presented it with supporting documentation. By that time Eulalia Millet had returned to her native Barcelona. Her husband's death, she claimed, had left her with no means of support but her own menial labor, which was becoming impossible because of her advancing years. At last His Benevolent Majesty was touched by her plea to the extent that he awarded her an annual pension of 150 pesos.¹⁷

In the interim, the whole matter of Texas coastal exploration had been given new currency, as the Karankawa problem remained a festering sore. Just prior to the rescue of Tomás de la Cruz, quite coincidentally, Commandant-General Croix had exhumed Ripperdá's August, 1777, report of Gil Ybarbo's reconnaissance. He forwarded a copy to Cabello on January 16, 1779, suggesting a new exploration from the Trinity River to the mouths of the Brazos and the Colorado.

Cabello probably received this communication before sending Tomás's testimony to Croix on March 14, but it was early April before he replied directly. A force from La Bahía, augmented by a contingent from Béxar, he suggested, could accomplish such a task without risk. Despite Luis Cazorla's exploration of the previous decade—the report evidently having been lost in the shuffle of files attending the change of viceroys and governors—Cabello was unable to find anyone at either post who claimed certain knowledge that the two rivers in question actually entered the Gulf of Mexico. Another expedition appeared necessary to clear up the matter, and he would arrange for it to leave after the middle of June, the most propitious time.¹⁸ If the expedition was ever made, the report of it is not found. The attention suddenly given Governor Ripperdá's report of the

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Gil Ybarbo exploration—now almost eighteen months old—seems remarkable for its tardiness and bad timing. Even more remarkable is the review made by Croix's aide, Pedro Galindo Navarro, under date of June 9, 1779—much too late to have been of value. The English ship *Gil Ybarbo* had found, he offered, might be useful for reconnoitering the Gulf coast and for crossing to the islands where the Karankawas and mission apostates took refuge. But surely, if the sloop *Robert* still lay on the bank of the Sabine, she was nothing more than a worm-eaten hulk. More likely, she had been put to the torch by the Indians and reduced to a pile of ashes, with no visible remains but a few nails overlooked by the natives in their quest for arrow tips.

As for the cargo of brick, Galindo suggested dividing it among the citizens of Bucareli village for construction of more permanent buildings. That the settlement at the Camino Real crossing on the Trinity River no longer existed seems to have escaped his notice. Bucareli's settlers had abandoned the site months previously to relocate at Nacogdoches. With his long distance vision, the commandant-general's aide advised that the Texas governor have the Gulf shore reconnoitered frequently, while constraining the peaceful Indians to report any ships approaching the coast. Almost two months later, on August 6, Croix added his endorsement to the tardy and irrelevant review.¹⁹

On October 7 that same year, 1779, Athanase de Mézières expended his dying energies composing one last report to Croix on the state of affairs in Texas. The Indian agent, manifesting a special concern for the Gulf coast, harbored bitter hatred for the Karankawas. Even after almost three centuries of Spanish presence in the Gulf, he lamented, the Texas littoral had not been adequately explored: "All the southern part of the province is coast. Who can give an account of it? Of the mouths of the rivers, the ports and bays, islands, and peninsulas, the number and the permanent residence of the execrable Carancaguases?" From indolence, he alleged, the Spanish Texans had failed to utilize the vast store of natural resources and to develop the trade that was essential to progress: "O, what an abuse!" Even the spacious bay where "the founder of Luisiana, Don Roberto de la Salle," had anchored his three ships remained in the hands of the same sanguinary Karankawas who had butchered La Salle's colonists almost a century ago; "such sad losses of life and property, and so many assassinations have been insufficient to induce us to acquire it."²⁰ Mézières, espousing the French view rather than the Spanish,

held commerce to be the solution to virtually all of Texas' problems. While Spain had imposed severe trade restrictions throughout the colonial period out of fear that it would invite foreign intrusion and avoid payment of Crown revenue, this Frenchman viewed commerce as essential to progress. Free exchange of the goods that abounded in the province should be permitted in Tampico, Campeche, and Louisiana to fill the colonists' need for items that they themselves could not produce: let Espíritu Santo Bay be opened for the purpose.

Significantly, no mention of Galveston Bay at this time is found, except as the receptacle of the Trinity and San Jacinto rivers. This lack serves to emphasize the truth of Mézières's claims that exploration of the Texas coast had been haphazard and inadequate. The same was true, to a lesser degree, of other coastal segments, but a catalyst already was at work. Spain, having taken advantage of the English colonies' rebellion to declare war on Great Britain the previous May, had seized the British posts along the Mississippi. As operations extended into the Gulf, they underscored the fact that exploration of that strategic enclosed sea, from Yucatán and Tabasco to Florida, was far from complete.

Whatever the outcome of the rebellion in the English colonies, as Mézières saw it, Spain would be hard pressed to hold back the tide of invaders that traditionally had threatened New Spain's northern provinces. The security of the Texas coast and its barrier islands, therefore, assumed added importance. Subjection of the Karankawas was an urgent need if Spain was to have full possession of the Gulf shore. In the Frenchman's view the means was a war of extinction, waged by land and sea. While the friendly Akokisa might be able to persuade some of their neighbors to peace, the Karankawan tribes had been admonished previously; no further warning was due.

For the maritime operation, the Indian agent suggested bringing from New Orleans three barges of the type used on the Mississippi. They were light but solid craft of six-ton capacity, each with two swivel guns mounted on the prow and propelled by sixteen oarsmen. Each could carry an attack force of seventy-five men, who should be chosen from the French and Spanish creoles and hunters of Louisiana. Proceeding through the bayous to Atákapa country, they could acquire native coastal pilots to guide them to the Akokisa at the mouth of the Trinity. Thence messengers could be sent to effect liaison with the land forces at Espíritu Santo Bay.

Significantly, Mézières was suggesting more than just a joint

Louisiana-Texas campaign; he was proposing a union of the Spanish horse soldiers of the Texas presidios with the Louisiana boat people, each contingent to function in its accustomed manner and sphere.

Between the land and sea forces, all the islands and the adjacent mainland should be examined, securing "perfect knowledge of the coast, of the mouth of the San Antonio River, and of the exterior and interior of said bay. . . ." Should the Karankawas choose to defend themselves, he continued, care should be taken "not to leave alive any of those who have committed so many murders."²¹

Lest he be adjudged an unworthy subject of His Catholic Majesty for proposing such a fire-and-blood policy, Mézières qualified his harsh stand: "let the women be spared, out of consideration for their sex; the infants, for their innocence; the youths, to make them hate the crimes of their ancestors; the adults, that they may not again perpetuate them"; but send them to faraway lands where they would lose all thought of returning to their perverse customs and compelled to render service that would compensate in small measure for the expense of their reduction.

A special thought was reserved for Joseph María, the renegade cutthroat who had murdered his own mother and perpetrated the massacre of Andry's crew: Let justice be satisfied by inflicting on this infamous rascal exemplary punishment "if it is possible to administer it in proportion to his atrocious deeds." Let him pay for all the savagery visited upon the unfortunates cast upon this hostile shore: the disastrous end of La Salle; the slaughter of the Chevalier Grenier's men of *La Superbe*—"so many youths, the most brilliant of New Orleans"—the engineer Don Luis Andry, and "numberless persons now buried in the forgetfulness of time."²²

The disaster that befell Andry and son—a loss felt most keenly in the Louisiana colony—had touched Mézières deeply. He finished his letter in eloquent and emotional lamentation:

O, sad event! O, deplorable adventure, in which a sad father saw assassinated his beloved son whom he clasped in his pious arms; in which a tender and helpless child saw the paternal breast, to which he was clinging, laid open by dagger thrusts. Most unhappy beings! What did you not suffer with the terrible anguish of death and love? You united the tears which were shed by your eyes with the blood which burst forth from your wounds; you breathed forth your sighs, and lost more than life.²³

Mézières never saw the vengeance he advocated visited upon the Karankawas. In San Antonio to take the office of governor, offered him by Croix, he died on November 2, 1779, of an injury that had gone untreated.

Domingo Cabello, having been led to expect a change of assignments and a promotion, saw such hopes fade with Mézières's death. Left to deal with the problems that he had hoped would belong to Mézières, he remained in Texas until 1786, when he was succeeded by Rafael Martínez Pacheco.²⁴ Not the least of these difficulties were the Karankawan tribes and the lack of security of the Gulf Coast.

In 1780 Cabello was forced temporarily to abandon his plans for exterminating the Karankawas as the Comanche problem became more pressing. The renegade Joseph María continued to make his presence known in onerous fashion, extending his raids even to San Antonio. By the end of 1782, the Karankawa problem seemed intolerable.²⁵ Not surprisingly, Cabello engaged another French trader to treat with the natives. He was Nicolás de La Mathe, merchant and militia captain from Pointe Coupée, a longtime partner of Gil Ybarbo in the Indian trade.²⁶

Since 1780 La Mathe, a man of "activity, zeal, and good character" in Cabello's estimation, had been involved in dealings with the Northern Tribes, as well as the Comanches. In 1783 La Mathe offered his services to lead an attack on the Karankawas' island stronghold, to free the Gulf coast once and for all from "the murders and indescribable outrages that they have committed against shipwrecked persons" such as Luis Andry and his crew. The plan as Cabello described it was to construct canoes at Camargo on the Rio Grande. These and other craft from Opelousas would be manned by one hundred hunters and oarsmen from Louisiana. Led by La Mathe himself, they would go to the islands and drive the Indians to the mainland, where troops from La Bahía and Béxar would "put them to the sword."²⁷

The plan, for one reason or another, languished until 1785, when the interim commandant-general of the Interior Provinces, Joseph Antonio Rengel, noted that as long as the bellicose Karankawas held the barrier islands, exploration in that area was effectively blocked. Rengel, seemingly more attentive to affairs in Texas than either of his predecessors (Croix and Felipe de Neve), sought the backing of both Governor Esteban Miró of Louisiana and the king for "reduction

or extermination" of the Karankawas. Governor Cabello, he said, was "fully authorized by this commandancy-general to carry out an expedition by sea and by land against those enemies" with troops from the provinces of Texas, Coahuila, and Nuevo Santander.²⁸

Cabello himself sought increased participation by Miró after the initial plan for building fourteen canoes on the Guadalupe River had proved impractical. The banks of the Guadalupe, he said, offered the only timber suitable for the construction, but it was too near the Karankawas' stronghold, too convenient for them to attack the camp and burn the boats before they could be put to use. A force large enough to protect the construction camp could not be provided. He asked the Louisiana official to furnish canoes for transporting two hundred armed men to the islands. Another Cabello letter to Miró, dated more than a year later, indicates that the assistance requested was not forthcoming. In the meantime, José de Evia had succeeded in mapping the coast from the east, including Matagorda Bay itself, and had approached the bay again from the other direction. If the benefits of his reconnaissance were as expected, Cabello prophesied, it would facilitate extermination of the dreaded enemies.²⁹

Cabello at this point could afford to be optimistic; his term was ending. Before the year was out, he turned the provincial government over to Martínez Pacheco. After an extended delay to put his records in order, he departed Texas for Mexico City. There he reported under date of November 25, 1787, on the province of Texas to the new viceroy, Manuel Antonio Flores. Offering a garbled version of the region's history and geography,³⁰ he manifested an extraordinarily bad memory concerning the shipboard massacre of Andry and his crew. He excused himself for what appears to be blatant falsehood by noting that the pertinent documents of his administration as Texas governor (spanning "eight years, one month, and three days") were not at hand.³¹

In 1779 Cabello had reported: "The Karankawas in their full strength are fifty to sixty souls, and the apostates of the mission of Rosario are very few because they are again being brought to the mission." If he wrote the truth in every instance, Cabello himself played a role in suppressing the Karankawas that is not evident otherwise. In response to the royal order (evidently transmitted by Rengel in 1785), he says, "I took the means of going personally to the coast on two occasions with troops from the presidios of San Antonio de Béxar and Bahía del Espíritu Santo, in which I managed to kill

more than thirty. . . . Because of having to attend to the great tasks that go with that governorship, I arranged that a part of the troop of both presidios should go out every month for the same purpose, by means of which plenty of others were killed."³² If all this is true, surely but few of the Karankawa warriors remained.

In his report to Viceroy Flores, Cabello provided late news of the infamous rascal Joseph María. Martínez Pacheco, having taken office as interim governor, sent emissaries to the coast to seek the leader of the apostates. Bearing gifts, they were to induce the recalcitrant natives to return to the missions, or at least come and talk with the governor, with the promise of pardon. Observing that his successor exceeded his authority in the matter, Cabello relates that, when Joseph María and ten companions came to Presidio de San Antonio de Béxar, they were accorded an artillery salute, showered with gifts, and entertained royally. Joseph María was given a captain's uniform decorated with a medal of merit on his promise that he would bring all the apostates and many others of his nation to settle four leagues from the presidio. (They did not care to return to the mission, thank you.) When Joseph María and his companions left San Antonio, supposedly to bring in the rest of his people to live in the new settlement, they were supplied with food and gifts, including firearms, and given an escort.

Arriving at the coast five days later, the soldiers found an encampment of some three hundred Karankawas, "both apostates and infidels." Uneasy, the Spaniards made camp a short distance from the Indians. They waited eighteen days without sign that Joseph María intended to carry out his agreement. When the sergeant approached the Indian leader to tell him it was time to move, the entire encampment became upset. A volley was fired, and the sergeant fell dead. The ten soldiers hastily withdrew to Presidio de la Bahía, leaving the sergeant's body and much of their equipage. By the time reinforcements arrived from La Bahía, the Indians had fled in canoes to their island stronghold. The sergeant's body, hacked to pieces, had to be gathered up in a blanket for burial.³³

Yet Karankawa numbers were diminishing under pressures of many kinds and with them the longstanding problem of the bloody barriers. A huge factor in the solution was the Comanches, who in the early 1780s had diverted Spanish action from the coastal natives by making themselves an even worse menace. In 1785, Cabello's agents, Pedro Vial and Francisco Xavier Chávez, negotiated peace with the